

CLAIMS

1 – 51. (CANCELLED)

52. (New) A method of facilitating game play, the method comprising:
receiving a payment for game play from a player;
displaying to the player a game board,
the game board containing a plurality of game icons;
prior to receiving a first game move, indicating to the player a first
direction in which at least one game icon remaining after the
first game move will shift;
receiving the first game move from the player,
the first game move indicating at least one game icon of the
plurality to remove from the game board;
removing from the game board the at least one game icon indicated by
the first game move;
shifting the at least one game icon remaining on the game board in the
indicated first direction;
determining a second direction; and
after receiving the first game move and prior to receiving a second
game move, indicating the second direction to the player.

53. (NEW) The method of claim 52, wherein the second direction is the
same as the first direction.

54. (NEW) The method of claim 52, wherein the at least one game icon remaining is associated with an icon type, and the removing is further based on icon types.
55. (NEW) The method of claim 54, wherein removing at least one game icon comprises removing a number of neighboring game icons based on respective types of neighboring game icons.
56. (NEW) The method of claim 55, further comprising:
adjusting a game score after the first game move based on the number of neighboring game icons removed from the game board .
57. (NEW) The method of claim 52, wherein the determining a second direction comprises at least one of:
(i) randomly selecting a direction, and (ii) retrieving a pre-stored indication of a direction.
58. (NEW) The method of claim 57, wherein a set of directions is associated with at least one of:
(i) a particular game played by the player, (ii) a plurality of games, and
(iii) a plurality of players.
59. (NEW) The method of claim 52, further comprising:
providing a prize based on a result of game play.

60. (NEW) The method of claim 59, wherein the prize comprises payment of at least one of: (i) a monetary amount, and (ii) an alternate currency amount.

61. (NEW) The method of claim 52, wherein the receiving a payment further comprises one of:

(i) receiving a payment identifier, (ii) charging a credit card account, (iii) charging a debit card account, and (iv) charging a bank account.

62. (NEW) The method of claim 52, wherein the receiving a first game move comprises receiving player input from a remote player device via a communication network.

63. (NEW) The method of claim 62, wherein the remote player device comprises at least one of:

(i) a personal computer, (ii) a portable computing device, (iii) a personal digital assistant, (iv) a telephone, (v) a wireless telephone, (vi) a game terminal, (vii) an interactive television device, and (viii) a kiosk.

64. (NEW) The method of claim 62, wherein the communication network comprises at least one of:

(i) the Internet, (ii) a public network, (iii) a public switched telephone network, (iv) a proprietary network, (v) a cable television network, (vi) a wireless network, and (vii) a local area network.

65. (NEW) A computer-readable medium containing instructions configured to direct a processor to:

- receive a payment for game play from a player;
- display to the player a game board,
 - the game board containing a plurality of game icons;
- prior to receiving a first game move, indicate to the player a first direction in which at least one game icon remaining after the first game move will shift;
- receive the first game move from the player,
 - the first game move indicating at least one game icon of the plurality to remove from the game board;
- remove from the game board the at least one game icon indicated by the first game move;
- shift the at least one game icon remaining on the game board in the indicated first direction;
- determine a second direction; and
- after receiving the first game move and prior to receiving a second game move, indicate the second direction to the player.

66. (NEW) An apparatus, the apparatus comprising:
- a processor; and
 - memory in communication with the processor,
 - the memory storing instructions configured to direct the processor to:
- receive a payment for game play from a player;
 - display to the player a game board,
 - the game board containing a plurality of game icons;
 - prior to receiving a first game move, indicate to the player a first direction in which at least one game icon remaining after the first game move will shift;
 - receive the first game move from the player,
 - the first game move indicating at least one game icon of the plurality to remove from the game board;
 - remove from the game board the at least one game icon indicated by the first game move;
 - shift the at least one game icon remaining on the game board in the indicated first direction;
 - determine a second direction; and
 - after receiving the first game move and prior to receiving a second game move, indicate the second direction to the player.